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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	INL-00
	DINT-00	DODE-00	DOT-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-00
	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00
	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01
	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	IRM-00
	SSO-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-01
	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/009W		
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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8103
INFO NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L HARARE 000537

SIPDIS

LONDON FOR CHARLES GURNEY

PARIS FOR BISA WILLIAMS

NAIROBI FOR TERRY PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/26/11

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SUBJECT: ZIMBABWE WAR VETERANS ON THE RAMPAGE

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CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE D'AFFAIRES EARL M. IRVING FOR
REASONS: 1.5 (B) AND (D).

1. (C) SUMMARY: ZIMBABWE'S SO-CALLED WAR VETERANS WENT ON A RAMPAGE ACROSS THE COUNTRY DURING THE WEEK OF JANUARY 22. HUNDREDS OF THEM, OR PEOPLE THEY DRAGOONED, HAVE BESIEGED THE HARARE OFFICES OF THE INDEPENDENT "THE DAILY NEWS" AND CONFISCATED THE PUBLICATION FROM VENDORS, HARASSED STRIKING CIVIL SERVICE WORKERS, AND RAIDED SEVERAL CITY COUNCIL OFFICES IN MATABELELAND TO EXPEL THEIR MEMBERS. THE WAR VETERANS' RENEWED ACTIVITY IN OPPOSITION STRONGHOLDS COULD INDICATE THAT ZANU-PF HAS NOT WRITTEN THEM OFF AS PRESUMED, AND THAT THESE AREAS WILL BE TARGETS OF INTIMIDATION IN THE RUN-UP TO THE 2002 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) ON JANUARY 23, THE INDEPENDENT "THE DAILY NEWS" REPORTED THAT WAR VETERANS AND A "HIRED CROWD," LED BY WAR VETERANS ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT CHENJERAI HUNZVI AND SELF-STYLED FARM OCCUPATIONS LEADER JOSEPH CHINOTIMBA, BESIEGED ITS HARARE OFFICES FOR SEVERAL HOURS. THE NEWSPAPER REPORTED THAT WAR VETERANS BLOCKED TRAFFIC, JOSTLED "DAILY NEWS" JOURNALISTS COVERING THE EVENT, BEAT UP PASSERS-BY WHO FAILED TO CHANT ZANU-PF SLOGANS, AND DAMAGED TWO OFFICE WINDOWS. APPARENTLY, NO WAR VETERANS ENTERED THE NEWSPAPER'S OFFICES, HOWEVER. THE JANUARY 24 GOVERNMENT MOUTHPIECE "THE HERALD" CHARACTERIZED THE DEMONSTRATION AS A "SOLIDARITY MARCH" TO SHOW ZIMBABWEAN SUPPORT FOR THE DRC. OBSERVERS REPORTED THAT THE UNRULY CROWD WAVED PROFESSIONALLY-PRINTED PLACARDS CRITICIZING THE NEWSPAPER'S REPORT THAT

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MOST ZIMBABWEANS WERE ELATED BY THE DRC PRESIDENT'S DEATH. THE JANUARY 25 "THE HERALD" REPORTED THAT WAR VETERANS IN MUTOKO DISTRICT OF MASHONALAND EAST PROVINCE DEMONSTRATED AGAINST THE "THE DAILY NEWS" FOR THE SAME ARTICLE. THE DEMONSTRATORS SAID THEY WOULD ENSURE THAT THE INDEPENDENT PAPER WAS NEVER CIRCULATED IN MUTOKO AGAIN. THE JANUARY 26 ISSUE OF THE "THE DAILY NEWS" STATED THAT ZANU-PF SUPPORTERS HAVE BEEN CONFISCATING FROM VENDORS COPIES OF "THE DAILY NEWS" AND BURNING THEM, AND THAT POLICE HAVE FAILED TO INTERVENE.

3. (U) ON JANUARY 24, ABOUT 100 WAR VETERANS DESCENDED ON MASVINGO TOWN TO FORCE STRIKING CIVIL SERVANTS, PRINCIPALLY TEACHERS, TO RETURN TO WORK, ACCORDING TO "THE DAILY NEWS." THE WAR VETS WARNED THAT ALL TEACHERS NOT REPORTING FOR WORK WOULD BE "AUTOMATICALLY DISMISSED." RETIRED ARMY CAPTAIN FRANCIS ZIMUTO, KNOWN AS BLACK JESUS, IS REPORTED TO HAVE ARRESTED THREE STRIKING TEACHERS AND TAKEN THEM TO A POLICE STATION. THE POLICE RELEASED THEM LATER THAT DAY. THE CAMPAIGN

APPEARS TO HAVE WORKED AS NEARLY ALL THE TEACHERS IN
MASVINGO SUBSEQUENTLY REPORTED FOR WORK.

14. (U) ON JANUARY 25, WAR VETERANS INVADED THE VICTORIA
FALLS TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES AND FORCED ITS WORKERS TO
LEAVE. THE COUNCIL OFFICE BUILDING ALSO HOUSES A NUMBER
OF TOUR OPERATORS, WHO WERE FORCED TO CLOSE DOWN. THE
VETS REPORTEDLY ACCUSED THE COUNCIL OF SYMPATHIZING WITH
THE OPPOSITION MDC. PRESS REPORTS INDICATED SAID THAT
ZANU-PF WAS ANGRY THAT THREE TOWN COUNCILLORS HAD
RECENTLY DEFECTED TO THE MDC, AND THAT IT SENT THE WAR
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VETERANS IN TO RETALIATE. IN MID-JANUARY, WAR VETS
INVADED ANOTHER MATABELELAND COUNCIL IN PLUMTREE TO
PROTEST ITS COMPOSITION. THE MATABELELAND SOUTH
GOVERNOR, STEPHEN NKOMO, LATER SUSPENDED EIGHT OFFICIALS
ON THE COUNCIL.

15. (C) COMMENT: THE RECENT WAVE OF WAR VETERANS ACTIONS
IN URBAN AND MATABELELAND AREAS--OPPOSITION STRONGHOLDS--
INDICATES THAT ZANU-PF HAS NOT WRITTEN THESE AREAS OFF
AS PRESUMED, AND THAT IT MAY EXTEND ITS INTIMIDATION
CAMPAIGN TO INCLUDE THESE AREAS IN THE RUN-UP TO THE
EARLY 2002 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. THE RULING PARTY HAS
A LOT OF GROUND TO COVER BEFORE THE ELECTION. WE CAN
EXPECT IT TO USE ITS "WAR VETERAN" SHOCK TROOPS MORE
FREQUENTLY OVER THE NEXT YEAR IN WAYS THAT ARE DIFFICULT
FOR THE STATUTORY SECURITY FORCES TO DO, I.E. TO REIN IN
WAYWARD LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES AND TO INTIMIDATE
TRADITIONAL OPPOSITION SUPPORTERS, SUCH AS TEACHERS,
URBANITES, AND THE INDEPENDENT MEDIA. END COMMENT.

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